

Center for Japanese Studies Seminar Series

Co-sponsored by the Department of Sociology

Voice, Silence, and Self: Negotiations of Buraku Identity in Contemporary Japan



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The Burakumin. Stigmatized in Japanese history as an outcaste group, their identity is still “risky,” their social presence mostly silent, and their experience marginalized in public discourse. They are contemporary Japan’s largest minority group—between 1.5 and 3 million people. How do young people today learn about being burakumin? How do they struggle with silence and search for an authentic voice for their complex experience?

This talk, based on my recent monograph, will examine how the mechanisms of silence surrounding burakumin issues are reproduced and challenged in Japanese society. I will explore the ways in which schools and social relationships shape people’s identity as burakumin within a “protective cocoon” where risk is minimized. Based on extensive ethnographic research and interviews, I will present the results of a longitudinal study exploring the experience of burakumin youth from two different communities and with different social movement organizations.

Voice, Silence, and Self (2015) by Professor Bondy is available now from [Harvard University Press](#).



Tuesday, March 8th, 2016
3:00 - 4:30 pm
Tokioka Room (Moore Hall 319)